



Health of the USAF, 1995

A Report on Morbidity, Mortality, and Disability within the Active Duty Air Force

THE REPORT

Health of the USAF, 1995 describes morbidity, or the Air Force experience with disease, as hospitalization rates per 100,000 and total hospital days per 10,000 for the top 30 diagnoses. It shows mortality, or death rates, by leading cause, and in figures adjusted for age and as lost years of potential life. It examines disability, or those factors that lead to medical discharge or separation, for overall rate and for leading causes.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

MORBIDITY

- Hospitalization declined overall during the 1990-1994 period for many conditions. Hospital days also decreased. These declines may be due to improved health practices, or may simply reflect a shift from inpatient to outpatient care and shortened hospital stays.
- Dental problems ranked 1st and 2nd in admissions to hospitals.
- Mental health problems were a major contributor to total hospital bed days.
- Female members are major consumers of Air Force health care. Overall rates for hospitalization were three times those for males.
- More than half of hospitalized female Air Force members were treated for obstetrical or genitourinary conditions.
- Males are more likely than females to be hospitalized for alcohol dependence. However, rates for this condition declined in the 1991-1994 period.
- Knee problems caused the most hospitalizations within the musculoskeletal category.
- Gastrointestinal illnesses and infectious disease had a minimal impact on hospitalization and hospital stays.

MORTALITY

- The leading cause of death for Air Force members was motor vehicle accidents.
- Mortality rates (age-adjusted) were well below those for the general US population and meet the established *Healthy People 2000* goal.
- Enlisted personnel had five times more lost years of potential life than officers, although this may only reflect the numbers of deaths in each category.

DISABILITY

- Rates rose consistently during the reporting period for those members being considered for medical discharge or separation. The rise was mostly due to an increase in permanent disability retirement.
- Back and knee conditions were the most common causes of disability among AF members. Psychiatric and neurologic conditions were the next most common.
- No analysis of disability data by age, gender, or race was possible, because these factors are, by law, excluded from physical evaluation board considerations.